

Escaping the Depression – Lesson Plan

Cross-Curricular: Jazz Band and U.S. History

Anticipatory Set (HOOK): *Bell-ringer:* Do you listen to the radio? When? Why? Show picture.

Essential Question(s): What is the importance on having an outlet to express and escape the stresses of life? How does music and radio impact and reflect society?

Objective(s): US HISTORY 9th Grade

1. Students will understand the impact of radio during the 1930s (Spread of Information, spread of music to your living room, comparison to TV and Internet *now*).
2. Students will explore the different ways people tried to take their minds off of the Great Depression: *ESCAPING and EXPRESSION during tough times.*
3. Students will listen to Swing music and understand the impact it had on society. (Tolerance, Racial and Gender equality, challenging social norms: *dancing, minority leaders, and new school vs. old school.*)

MI STATE STANDARD: USHG 7.1 Growing Crisis in Industrial Capitalism and Responses
Chapter 15 Section 4 (in Text Book)

*Students will learn about concert etiquette

*Students will learn the differences of classic 1920s Jazz vs. 1930s “Swing”.

*Students will learn about individual: music pieces, artists/musicians, and music expression: the importance on the individuality, improvisation, and challenging social norms.

Procedure:

1. Students enter classroom and do a daily “Bell-ringer”: *How does music relate to people and society?* [5 minutes]
2. Pass out note sheet to students and go over the schedule (remind students of expectations) [2-3 minutes]
3. Take class down to Band Room [1-2 minutes]
4. Introduce class to Jazz Band and remind them of classroom expectations and concert etiquette (get everyone seated) [3-5 minutes]
5. Jazz Band plays song #1: *“It Don’t Mean a Thing (if it ain’t got that swing)”* 1932
 - a. SCHLEGEL: Talk about piece
 - Duke Ellington – trumpet player, band leader and now dubbed “composer”
 - This was one of the first songs with the word “swing” in the title. Though common among jazzers, the song introduces the concept and word to the general public and into our vocabulary. It is said be kind of a tribute to Ellington’s trumpet player Bubber Miley, who was dying of tuberculosis. Miley said the phrase often.
 - Write 8th notes on the board, demonstrate straight and swung. Do the same in piece so students can see importance of interpretation.
 - b. LINDQUIST: Impact of Radio: Advantages, Change, and Comparison to TV/Internet
 - Is everything on TV true? How about the Radio?

- Anecdotal Story about Radio: *War of the Worlds* → *Social PANIC!*

6. Jazz Band plays song #2: “My Funny Valentine” 1937

- SCHLEGEL: talk about the piece, applause/concert procedures
 - Originally from Broadway musical *Babes in Arms*. Billie (Mitzi Green) pokes fun at her Valentine, Val (Ray Heatherton) and says that though he isn’t perfect she doesn’t want him to change. (Mention lyric examples?)
 - Became a jazz standard. Performed and recorded by Miles Davis, Frank Sinatra, Ella, Bing, Barbara, Dolly...even Michael Buble.
 - Concert etiquette – concert band vs. jazz ensembles
- LINDQUIST: More on Radio:
 - EXPRESSION vs. ESCAPING the pressures/stresses of the Great Depression
- Introduce “Swing” Style of music and Glen Miller bringing Swing/Jazz to mainstream America (BIG BAND)

7. Jazz Band plays song #3: “In the Mood” 1940

- SCHLEGEL: Jazz of the 1920s vs. Swing in the 1930s
 - 3 main predecessors of jazz → Brass bands, rag time, Blues
 1. Brass band – left over Civil War “community bands”
 2. Rag time – syncopated piano music adapted to instrumental playing
 3. Blues – imported vocal style of Africa, blossomed in Louisiana, especially with Creole groups, adapted to instruments. Blue notes (notes between those available on western scale) very important.
 4. All jazz is made up of 2 main components – Improvisation and Swing
 - 1920’s jazz – “archaic” Made up mainly of melody section (clarinet, trumpet trombone) and rhythm section, small combo groups most common. Heavily based on aural skills and improvisation. Few could read music.
 - 1930’s Big Band/Swing era – more members, flashy clothes, more written numbers, more reserved solos, saxes become more important. We have more of a big band set up (too many trumpets). Swing is more for dancing. Had a huge impact on culture.
- LINDQUIST:
 - EFFECTS of “Swing” → At first met with great resistance. The older generation and upper class viewed jazz as immoral and rejected it (So it started as a form of rebellion...anything your parents listen to is lame anyways?) By the mid-1930s it became extremely popular and a cultural force thanks to guys like Glen Miller.
 - ESCAPING the Great Depression: Life was really stressful and tough and people would do anything they could to take their mind off of their circumstances.
 - END: Talk about how Swing music brought people together. By the late 1930s nearly ALL people in the U.S. found some form of “Swing” music favorable. It provided as a social medium for bringing people together.

With the unique emphasis on the individual fitting in with the group, improvisation, minority band leaders (like Duke Ellington), and cultural impact it had in the 1930s, "Swing" music helped ease the tensions and challenge social norms of the time.

→Lead to last Jazz band song (Story: How it was written...groovy)

8. Jazz Band plays song #4: "*Big Noise from Winnetka*" 1938
 - a. Close: Thank the Jazz Band for participating and letting us sit in and hear their music.
 - Thank you: Ms. Schlegel, Administrator for sitting in, Applause
 - If time: head back to class. If not: dismiss from Band Room.

Materials: Pencil, notepad/note-sheet, willing/able jazz band, students eager to learn.

ASSESSMENT: Students will be formatively assessed based on classroom participation: in discussion and in note taking. Students will be assessed in an open ended written response about music impacts and why it is/was important.

Written Response

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

- How does music impact your life?
- Does it provide an "*ESCAPE* from reality" or a means to "*EXPRESS*" your feelings?
- What type of music do you listen to when you are sad, happy, and nervous/stressed?